

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 09555

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E.O. 11652: X-GDS-1
TAGS: FR, GW, BR, CE, CG
SUBJECT: FRENCH DISTRESS OVER OTRAG

REF: (A) BRASILIA 1638; (B) PARIS 3527 (NODIS NOTAL)

1. ELYSEE INTERNATIONAL STAFF SOURCE (PROTECT THROUGH-OUT) HAS DISCUSSED WITH EMBOFF ON STRICTLY PERSONAL BASIS THE "KEEN ATTENTION" WITH WHICH SENIOR ELYSEE OFFICIALS, INCLUDING FRANCOIS-PONCET, ARE FOLLOWING OTRAG'S ACTIVITIES. LUTZ KAYSER'S FEBRUARY TRIP TO BRAZIL (REPORTED REFTEL A) DEEPENED ELYSEE'S INNER CIRCLE'S ANXIETIES (REFTEL B) OVER THE ULTIMATE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE OPERATIONS.

2. SOURCE SAID THE ELYSEE IS QUITE AWARE THAT OTRAG'S ACTIVITIES IN ZAIRE ARE NOT "IMMEDIATELY" SIGNIFICANT. ON OTHER HAND, THE EVOLVING, IF STILL PARTIALLY EMBRYONIC, PATTERN OF FRG RELATIONSHIPS IN BRAZIL, ZAIRE AND SOUTH AFRICA IN NUCLEAR REPROCESSING AND ENRICHMENT FIELD ON THE ONE HAND, AND NOW POSSIBLY IN PROPELLANT AND SATELLITE LAUNCHING FIELD ON THE OTHER, WAS "VERY THOUGHT-PROVOKING." THIS IS PARTICULARLY THE CASE SINCE FINANCIAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT WAS CLEARLY INVOLVED IN OTRAG'S CASE.

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3. ELYSEE HAD NO DOUBTS OVER PURITY OF FRG'S "CURRENT INTENTIONS." HOWEVER, HE SAID IF FRENCH THEMSELVES WERE IN FRG'S CURRENT GEOPOLITICAL POSITION THEY TOO MIGHT WISH TO HAVE "A SECOND IRON IN THE FIRE" AS AN ACE IN THE HOLE IN A HYPOTHETICAL SITUATION WHEN NO OTHER OPTIONS MIGHT REMAIN OPEN TO THEM. ONE WAY TO

DO THIS MIGHT BE TO HELP TO DEVELOP OVER TIME NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES IN BRAZIL AND/OR SOUTH AFRICA, WHICH UNDER AS YET UNFORESEEABLE CIRCUMSTANCES MIGHT, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, BE AT THE FRG'S MILITARY DISPOSITION. ELYSEE, SOURCE SAID, CANNOT HELP BUT RECALL THAT SUCH METHODOLOGY HAD BEEN USED BY GERMANY IN THE PAST.

4. FOR ALL THESE REASONS, ELYSEE WAS "CURIOUS" WHY US REPS TENDED TO BE SO "SURE" AS TO INNOCENCE OF OTRAG'S ACTIVITIES. SOURCE EMPHASIZED HE WAS NOT FISHING FOR SENIOR-LEVEL EXCHANGE OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION. ON THE OTHER HAND ELYSEE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CONTINUE TO BE VERY INTERESTED IN ANY COMMENTS US MIGHT HAVE FROM TIME TO TIME ON OTRAG AND RANGE OF RELATED ISSUES.
HARTMAN

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